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Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Analysis of health, education and culture prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Summary

The present report provides an analysis of the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on health, education and culture based on reports received from Governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report seeks to provide an analysis of the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues reached at its second to eleventh sessions on health, education and culture. While the report does not constitute a global analysis of the health, education and cultural issues affecting indigenous peoples around the world, it does provide information on the consideration and implementation of those issues at the international and national levels.

2. Health, education and culture are areas that require shifts in the current paradigms and different approaches in the formulation of conceptual frameworks, policies and guidelines. A better understanding of indigenous peoples' world views and their involvement in policy and decision-making will result in improved outcomes. An example is in the area of education, where the authoritarian approach of most educational systems imposed on indigenous peoples did not take into consideration the importance of cultural values and emphasized integration of indigenous peoples into the national mould. Most indigenous students failed to adapt to these systems and, as a result, indigenous peoples have high illiteracy rates and poor educational qualifications. The lack of education means that many indigenous peoples can expect low wages, if they can find jobs at all.

3. The alarming deterioration of health conditions within indigenous communities continues to be a major issue for the Permanent Forum. Even though a number of indigenous communities are provided with basic health services, these services are still inadequate and do not cover the needs of the community. The absence of adequate medical facilities is often seen as due to the remoteness of indigenous communities and the reluctance of certain indigenous peoples to use the available health centres. Further, health practitioners often view patients' culture as a barrier to care. Therefore, awareness-raising and the delivery of culturally appropriate health care require ongoing work. Further, there is a need for practitioner competencies in specific areas of cultural knowledge, and specific skills in intercultural communication.

4. For indigenous peoples, cultural belief systems and world views are based on their sacred relationships to each other and Mother Earth, which have sustained them through time. The contributions and participation of traditional knowledge holders, indigenous women and youth are well known and well regarded in indigenous communities. Culture is a way of being and living with nature, underpinning indigenous peoples' values, moral and ethical choices. Indigenous peoples' survival is dependent on their cultures, including their social, material and spiritual strength. Indigenous peoples believe that culture is the most fundamental dimension of sustainable development.

II. Analysis of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

A. Health

5. Indigenous peoples have a holistic and collective view of health and well-being, one which involves all members of the community and encompasses physical, social, mental, environmental and spiritual dimensions. Health is one of

the six substantive mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and covers a wide range of issues, such as access, and especially indigenous women's access to comprehensive, community-based and culturally appropriate health-care services, health education, adequate nutrition and housing; health of indigenous children, youth and women; indigenous peoples' free prior and informed consent to medical treatment; incidence of mortality and morbidity; mental health; sexual and reproductive health; traditional medicine and health systems.

6. In addition, the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous People has included health as one of the priority areas where action is needed in several areas, namely, HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; practices which have negative impacts on health, including female genital mutilation, child marriages, violence against women, youth and children; alcohol and drug abuse; environmental degradation, including use of indigenous peoples' lands for military testing, toxic by-product storage, nuclear and industrial exploitation and contamination of water and other natural resources; health problems connected to forced relocation, armed conflicts, migration, trafficking and prostitution.

7. Health issues are also incorporated in a number of articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Articles 21 to 24 outline the rights of indigenous peoples to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and other related rights, such as the rights to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation and social security; further, they outline that indigenous peoples are actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and the right to administer such programmes through their own institutions; to maintain traditional medicines and health practices, including the conservation of vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals; and to access all social and health services. States are called upon to pay particular attention to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration. In addition, specific measures should be taken to ensure that indigenous peoples enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination, and to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions.

8. Between its first and tenth sessions, the Permanent Forum made recommendations on health that covered a range of health issues, such as the human right to health and to culturally appropriate health care; social and economic determinants of health; non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, mental health and suicide; nutrition and food. Also covered were indicators and data collection; health in conflict situations; health-related aspects of the Millennium Development Goals, such as child mortality and maternal health (Goals 4 and 5), and HIV/AIDS (Goal 6).

Intercultural approach to health

9. The Permanent Forum made 13 recommendations on the promotion of a holistic and intercultural approach to health, including traditional medicine and health practices. The majority of recommendations recognize the significance of incorporating an indigenous understanding of health and well-being for the

development of policies and guidelines on health care at the national and international levels. Recommendations request States and the United Nations system to incorporate the principle that health is a fundamental human right, and to foster a rights-based approach to health, including the right to culturally sensitive services.

10. At its fifth session, the Permanent Forum requested that all United Nations entities incorporate a cultural perspective into health policies, programmes and services, with specific reference to reproductive health services. In several recommendations, the Forum also highlighted the need to re-evaluate the role of indigenous traditional health practitioners, including midwives, as cultural brokers between the health system and the indigenous communities' values and world views. Their role can be significant in several areas, such as treatment of HIV/AIDS, assistance to indigenous women, and valorization of traditional medicine. Recommendations also requested studies on how health services that are sensitive to traditional health-care practices may be provided to indigenous peoples who do not have access to direct health care.

11. While recommendations calling for studies, as requested by the Permanent Forum, have yet to be initiated, the implementation of other recommendations is ongoing. At the country level, efforts to incorporate a culturally sensitive approach to health have achieved some results, especially in the area of maternal health. At the international level, the Permanent Forum has applauded the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for applying culturally sensitive approaches to health delivery, but it also stressed that these require more effort, and sharing experiences and best practices is of paramount importance, especially with other agencies working primarily in the field of health (see E/2007/43, para. 62).

Non-communicable diseases and mental health

12. Since its second session, the Permanent Forum has addressed the important issues related to the high rate of mental health diseases, and specifically the high incidence of suicide in indigenous communities, especially among indigenous youth. The Permanent Forum has made repeated calls for action to address the issue of suicide. One of the recommendations by the Forum was undertaking a study on the prevalence and causes of suicide among indigenous youth and encouraged efforts to address the promotion of health, including mental health and wellness, on the basis of a cultural-based approach (E/2003/43, para. 82). Other recommendations included the organization of a workshop on policies and best practices of indigenous youth and children on the prevention of suicide; and a meeting to assess the root causes of suicide of indigenous youth in order to formulate preventive strategies (E/2004/43, para. 96, and E/2007/43, para. 65). However, implementation of these recommendations remains ongoing.

13. At its seventh and eighth sessions, the Permanent Forum expressed concerns about the increasing incidence of tuberculosis among indigenous peoples and that a greater focus on non-communicable diseases is needed. Considering the staggering prevalence of diabetes among indigenous peoples, the Permanent Forum has made recommendations calling for culturally appropriate health services, with a focus on health education as a necessary component of any preventive strategy. The Permanent Forum has recognized that diabetes is linked to a host of other health problems, such as growing malnutrition and obesity rates that can seriously affect

both indigenous women's and men's reproductive health, which impacts their children. The Permanent Forum has called upon States and the United Nations system to undertake studies on the prevalence of such diseases among indigenous peoples, and the development of joint strategies to address diabetes and related non-communicable illnesses. The absence of indigenous peoples in creating relevant policies on health-related issues was evident when indigenous representatives were not included in the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, held in September 2011.

14. Overall, the recommendations addressed to States and the United Nations system have been limited in number and scope, compared to the gravity and the high incidence rate of non-communicable diseases and mental illnesses in indigenous communities. Responses to the recommendations have been scarce and have not brought about significant changes, either in terms of collecting and analysing data specifically related to indigenous peoples, or in terms of implementation of measures for the prevention and control of such diseases. In addition, there are gaps in the implementation of the Permanent Forum's recommendations in addressing the economic and social determinants of non-communicable diseases, such as urbanization and changing lifestyles, lack of access to traditional lands and livelihoods, changing nutrition path and food habits.

15. The Permanent Forum made five recommendations that specifically targeted issues linked to food and nutrition. The Forum's recommendations included a study on food security, subsistence agricultural practices and health; reiterating the right to adequate and nutritional foods and clean drinking water and the right to maintain traditional subsistence foods. The Permanent Forum also called for the recognition of the right to food and nutritional security and the sustainable production and consumption of healthy and nutritious foods. Recommendations to United Nations agencies were made to base their interventions on reducing malnutrition among indigenous peoples on assessments of the structural causes, including access to lands and availability of natural resources (E/2007/43, para. 64). While implementation of these recommendations is ongoing, the World Food Programme did report that there is a proposal to produce locally fortified complementary foods based on indigenous nutritious products. In addition, the Permanent Forum held a half-day discussion on the theme "The rights of indigenous peoples to food and food sovereignty" at its eleventh session in 2012 to address these major concerns (E/2011/43).

Health of indigenous children, youth, women; sexual and reproductive health

16. Recommendations on protecting the right to health of indigenous children, youth and women have been a major focus of the Forum. Most of these recommendations have been addressed to UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO). The majority of recommendations call upon States and United Nations entities to give special emphasis to issues of infant mortality, reproductive rights, sterilization, violence and domestic abuse, and addiction, as well as the collection of data relating to these issues (E/2002/43, para. 10; E/2003/43, para. 64). In some cases, the urgency to address the specific needs of children and youth has been recognized, for example in initiatives such as the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (E/2003/43, para. 79). Since its first session, the Permanent Forum has requested technical seminars with a view to expanding global programmes on immunization and vaccination to indigenous communities

(E/2002/43, para. 11). The Permanent Forum has also called for the preparation of a report on indigenous children who have limited or no access to direct health care. The implementation of these recommendations is still ongoing. Moreover, the importance of birth registration for indigenous children has been highlighted by the Forum as having a direct link to allocation of health services (E/2007/43, para. 66). In this regard, States have reported on efforts made to increase the free and universal civil registration of indigenous peoples, in cooperation with organizations such as UNICEF, UNFPA and in some instances, with the Inter-American Development Bank.

17. With respect to the health of indigenous women, the Permanent Forum has focused its attention on health-related aspects of violence, including war-related violence and domestic violence. At its third session, the Forum focused on indigenous women's right to health (E/2004/43, para. 89) and addressed the following priority areas: ensuring universal access to culturally acceptable and appropriate health-care services; curbing programmes of forced sterilization and abortion, which can constitute ethnic genocide; developing innovative strategies in health services to women informed by indigenous concepts of health and wellness; supporting comprehensive, community-based primary health services and health education, incorporating traditional components, such as the employment of traditional health practitioners and midwives.

18. While implementation of the Permanent Forum's recommendations at the national level by States is ongoing, at the regional level, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) reported significant progress in the Latin America and the Caribbean region through the "Health of Indigenous Peoples", which adopts an intercultural approach and is incorporating indigenous practices, therapies and medicines in primary health care. In addition, UNICEF has been very active in supporting Governments and indigenous communities to develop and implement local and national intercultural public policies for prenatal and postnatal care. UNFPA has been implementing intercultural reproductive health programmes in several countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Some United Nations entities have established functioning programmes and developed good practices, mainly in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. **Successful programmes need to be extended to other regions and best practices should be shared in order to expand achievements. Despite the number of recommendations that have been adopted on indigenous women's sexual and reproductive health, there is an information gap regarding whether studies were undertaken and workshops organized. The health needs of youth, especially of indigenous girls, should be considered as a priority.**

Environment and health

19. The health of indigenous peoples can be adversely affected by external factors occurring on indigenous lands and territories, such as pollution, climate change and the presence of conflicts of which indigenous peoples are, in the majority of cases, the victims. At its second session in 2003, while recommending that States ratify the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Permanent Forum also recommended that the Special Rapporteur on toxic waste conduct a workshop on the impact of persistent organic pollutants and pesticides on indigenous peoples. There have been some meetings dealing with the impact of climate change on the health of indigenous peoples, and some information is available on the health effects on

indigenous peoples caused by uranium mining, dumping of radioactive waste and nuclear testing. However, the Permanent Forum is of the view that a consolidated report on these issues is still required (E/2008/43, para. 87; E/2009/43, para. 77).

20. **Concerned at the wars occurring in many regions, including the African continent, the Permanent Forum also recommended a meeting aimed at evaluating the negative effects of conflicts on the health of indigenous peoples (E/2007/43, para. 68). It is imperative to address this issue as soon as possible.**

Millennium Development Goals

21. The Permanent Forum devoted its fourth (2005) and fifth (2006) sessions to an analysis of the Millennium Development Goals from the perspective of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples stressed the urgency of redefining approaches to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in order to include their concerns and world views and identified the lack of disaggregated data as an obstacle to assessing the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. HIV/AIDS (Millennium Development Goal 6) is one of the challenges faced by indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum has sought UNAIDS involvement and engagement on these issues, including the preparation of a study on AIDS impacting indigenous children and infants. The Permanent Forum also requested that UNAIDS include indigenous organizations and health providers in community-based culturally appropriate HIV/AIDS programmes (see E/2006/43, paras. 18, 36, 37).

22. In 2009, Health Canada, in collaboration with UNAIDS and the Public Health Agency of Canada, hosted an International Policy Dialogue on HIV/AIDS and Indigenous Peoples in Ottawa, Canada. The dialogue provided a platform to discuss the impact of HIV/AIDS on indigenous peoples, and to explore a way forward in terms of research, policy and programme development. The final report that emerged out of that dialogue states that the relationship between HIV and indigenous peoples has not received due international attention, despite the fact that indigenous peoples have particular vulnerabilities to acquiring HIV.[1]

Other issues

23. In response to a specific recommendation calling for the development of participatory health research guidelines and the application of free, prior and informed consent (E/2003/43, para. 69), WHO issued a publication in 2003 which emphasized that health research involving indigenous peoples needs to be organized, designed and carried out in a manner that takes into account cultural differences, is based on mutual respect and is beneficial and acceptable to all parties.

24. A large number of recommendations focused on the need to gather data on indigenous peoples' health. The availability of data has continuously been seen by the Permanent Forum as the precondition for designing programmes and services for indigenous peoples based on the criteria of ethnicity, cultural and tribal affiliation and language (ibid., para. 70). Despite many recommendations, the lack of disaggregated data continues to be one of the main challenges in the area of health.

[1] http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2010/2010_hiv_indigenous_peoples_en.pdf.

25. The Permanent Forum has also called upon States and United Nations entities to develop and implement right-to-health indicators, to develop benchmarks and timelines, in order to ensure that indigenous peoples' right to health is progressively realized, and to better assist in the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes at national and international levels. Implementation of right-to-health indicators is ongoing.

26. The Permanent Forum has stressed the need to examine the disparity of health standards for indigenous peoples (E/2004/43, para. 91) and assessments on the structural causes of health problems. The Permanent Forum also considers that access to land and availability of natural resources are all part of indigenous peoples' health issues and that there is a need to respect indigenous peoples' models of development (E/2007/43, para. 64). Addressing these important issues requires a tremendous effort from all parties concerned.

27. Table 1 provides a breakdown by Permanent Forum session of the number of recommendations made and implemented concerning education.

Table 1
Implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on health

	Recommendations		
Permanent Forum session	*Total*	*Implemented (ongoing or complete)*	*Not yet implemented or reporting not received*
First	7	2	5
Second	20	11	9
Third	7	5	2
Fourth	4	3	1
Fifth	6	6	–
Sixth	10	8	2
Seventh	2	1	1
Eighth	4	1	3
Ninth	0	–	–
Tenth	4	3	1
Total	**64**	**40**	**24**

Conclusions

28. Health is a major issue for the Permanent Forum especially due to the lack of understanding of how health issues impact on indigenous peoples in terms of their identity, cultural, social, economic and political rights. The rights to health, education and cultural identity, have to be understood as an economic and social and human rights' issue. In addition, they are necessary preconditions for indigenous peoples to pursue their collective development. Health and well-being are at the core of indigenous peoples' right to life, their right to dignity and well-being.

B. Education

29. Historically, many indigenous peoples consider the education system to be a means of assimilation. For example, indigenous peoples argue that the historic purpose of boarding schools was to assimilate indigenous peoples into the dominant society in which they lived. Often a stated rationale for boarding schools was that they provided a means for indigenous peoples to achieve status in the dominant society.[2] Boarding schools in many regions of the world signified that indigenous children were often not given the educational skills necessary to assimilate into the higher echelons of the larger society. Rather, they were trained to do either domestic work or manual labour.[3]

30. Many indigenous peoples recognized that education is an important development tool and are mindful of the indigenous view that education is a lifelong process. The important connection between education and indigenous peoples includes the enrichment of communities and vibrant economies. However, educational attainment and completion rates remain an area of concern and are partially explained by multiple barriers that limit access to, and persistence in, completing education. Therefore, innovative programming for student retention and support is required to help learners overcome challenges.

31. Indigenous peoples enjoy fewer years of schooling than their peers, which often does not take their cultural backgrounds into consideration and they have less access to education and vocational training than the majority population. In addition, their traditional educational systems may not be recognized at the same level as the mainstream system if at all taken into consideration. While indigenous women and girls are crucial traditional knowledge holders, in many cases, they have been particularly disadvantaged in the education systems. Key issues for indigenous peoples and education include ensuring that (a) their cultures and histories are accurately portrayed in curricula; (b) they have full and equal access to education; (c) they have access to teaching in their own languages and indigenous schools and universities.

32. Articles 11 to 15 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have enshrined education as a key issue. Article 11 and 12 cover indigenous peoples' right to access and practice of their culture and their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies. Article 13 covers the right to know, use and pass on to future generations their distinct languages, histories and oral traditions. More specifically, articles 14 and 15 concern the rights to establish and control their own educational systems and institutions, the right of indigenous individuals to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination; access to education; dignity and diversity appropriately reflected in curricula; that States must ensure effective consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples

[2] D. W. Adams, *Education for Extinction*, Topeka, University of Nebraska Press, 1995; T. Fitzgerald, *Education and Identity*, Wellington, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1977; R. Manne, "Aboriginal Child Removal and the Question of Genocide, 1900-1940, in A. Dirk Moses (ed.) *Genocide and Settler Society*, New York, Berghahn Books, pp. 217-243; Commonwealth of Australia, *Bringing them Home*, Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, 1997.

[3] "Indigenous Peoples and Boarding Schools: A Comparative Study", prepared by Andrea Smith, for the secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (E/C.19/2009/CRP.1).

to eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations between indigenous peoples and other segments of society. In addition to the Declaration, there are several international instruments and declarations that form the basic framework for the provision of quality education for indigenous peoples, the recognition of their rights to education, including those pertaining to access to education. The instruments and declarations include the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), ILO Convention No. 169, articles 26 to 31, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, articles 28 to 30.

33. At its second to tenth sessions, the Permanent Forum made a total of 42 recommendations covering a range of issues pertaining to indigenous peoples and education. Specifically, issues covered included bilingual and intercultural education, resource mobilization for indigenous education, primary education including Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals, which is achieving universal primary education. Other issues covered included quality of education and curricula, participation, the right to education, boarding schools, indigenous universities, access to education, and inequalities.

Support to bilingual and intercultural education

34. The Permanent Forum has continuously focused on indigenous peoples' right and access to bilingual and intercultural education. From its second to tenth session, 10 recommendations were made on this topic. The majority of the recommendations were requests for support from States and the United Nations system for intercultural and bilingual education programmes. Several responses to the recommendations were received from (a) UNICEF reporting, inter alia, on a programme on cultural and linguistic diversity in education; (b) the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported that continued collaboration was taking place with Ministries of Education at the country-level to promote education policy reform in favour of indigenous peoples, including support for intercultural education strategies, and promoting the education for indigenous girls; and (c) Canada noted its continued collaboration with First Nations and that the number of First Nations schools increased by 40 per cent from 1992-1993 to 2002-2003.

35. In addition, at its second session the Permanent Forum recommended that States conduct programmes for indigenous peoples to enhance cultural diversity. Canada reported that its initiatives in this regard included establishing a National Working Group on Education with 15 aboriginal members to provide advice to the Minister on how to narrow the education gap between First Nations and other Canadian students. In response to a recommendation that UNESCO, the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNICEF and other relevant United Nations agencies convene an expert meeting to explore intercultural education, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity reported that although the convention works on community education, public awareness and capacity-building, it does not have a mandate to pursue bilingual and intercultural education in the context of teaching in mother tongue indigenous languages.

Resource mobilization for indigenous education

36. The Permanent Forum made seven recommendations from its second to tenth session relating to funding of indigenous education programmes and activities.

Mainly, the Permanent Forum called for continuous and new possibilities of resource mobilization for indigenous education, from both United Nations agencies and Governments. Specifically, several recommendations were made to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to, inter alia, (a) support intercultural and bilingual education programmes and to promote the right to education, with an emphasis on indigenous children, and that direct financial assistance to indigenous educational institutions should be considered; and (b) continue to operate the World Bank's Grants Facility for Indigenous Peoples. IFAD responded in turn by listing supported projects; and that in addition to its operational and advocacy work, it would concentrate its efforts on developing the IFAD principles of engagement with indigenous peoples and to operate and mobilize resources for the "indigenous peoples' assistance facility", which was transferred from the World Bank to IFAD in 2006.

37. The Permanent Forum made a recommendation to UNESCO and other relevant agencies that focused specifically on requesting more funds, through appropriate means, for activities such as facilitating educational exchanges between indigenous peoples and others in order to make contributions to the cultural diversity and to preserve indigenous peoples' cultural heritage. In response, UNESCO advised that at least 20 activities with corresponding budgetary allocations included indigenous peoples as a central focus of their action. Specifically addressed to the United States of America and Canada, the Permanent Forum urged the two Governments to financially support indigenous community education systems and their efforts to protect and perpetuate indigenous languages, on par with their dominant languages. In response, the United States of America stated that various efforts regarding indigenous peoples and the Millennium Development Goals had been undertaken and that it had prioritized funding for Indian education to support the attainment of Millennium Development Goal 2, to achieve universal primary education.

Millennium Development Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

38. The fourth session of the Permanent Forum was dedicated to Millennium Development Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty, and Millennium Development Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education. Of the eight recommendations made by the Permanent Forum on Goal 2, six were made at its fourth session. All six recommendations except for one are addressed to States and focus primarily on (a) the right to access to primary education, and (b) the quality and cultural appropriateness of primary education for indigenous peoples. Despite the numerous recommendations on Goal 2 and indigenous peoples, few States responded directly to the queries raised by the Permanent Forum.[4] From United Nations agencies, several entities responded:

(a) On the issue of recognizing the right to education as a key instrument for achieving equitable development and respect for cultural development, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) noted the work by the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues and reported on an expert seminar on indigenous peoples and education which was organized in cooperation with UNESCO;

[4] Responses included a report by Argentina (E/C.19/2006/4).

(b) The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported on the need to share experiences on education that represent best practices at the primary or community levels and that its approach focused on (i) investments in skilled and motivated teachers; (ii) the elimination of child labour as an impediment to education; and (iii) promotion of education, decent work and increased family income.

Quality of education and curricula

39. The quality of the education and the curricula available to indigenous peoples were the main focus in six recommendations. Overall, the Permanent Forum calls for United Nations agencies and States to develop culturally relevant curricula and educational material and pedagogy to improve access to and quality of indigenous education. To ensure the latter, it is essential that indigenous knowledge and culture are built into education programmes and curricula. UNESCO reported on its continuous technical assistance to the development of curricula and guidelines for textbooks and learning materials by producing and disseminating publications (E/C.19/2006/6/Add.9). In addition, the Permanent Forum recommended that States and United Nations agencies consider creating international indigenous universities. The creation of such institutions at the international level is still ongoing. Along those lines, the Permanent Forum also recommended the creation and/or consolidation of academic institutions to train indigenous leaders and urge existing universities to develop curricula on indigenous peoples. Such indigenous-focused university programmes have gained some traction but the need for consistency requires more effort. On the issue of boarding schools, the Permanent Forum recognized that they had had a very negative and even tragic impact on the families, cultures and identity of indigenous peoples. Conversely, today boarding schools are seen in some cases as an important step for indigenous children who do not have other educational options (E/2007/43, para. 70). Based on the complexity of the issue, the secretariat of the Permanent Forum was charged with undertaking a comparative study on indigenous peoples and boarding schools, which was submitted at the eighth session (E/2009/43).

Indigenous peoples' participation

40. Eight recommendations were made by the Permanent Forum on the issue of indigenous peoples' participation in the process of enhancing the access to and quality of indigenous education. Aside from recommending that indigenous peoples be invited to participate in UNESCO activities to ensure the recognition and contribution of indigenous knowledge, the Permanent Forum also requested that States consider adopting and implementing comprehensive national education policies based on participation, among others. Playing a crucial role in ensuring participation, the Permanent Forum made several recommendations pertaining to awareness-raising and information dissemination. This resulted in responses on examples of participation and awareness-raising from, inter alia, the Governments of Finland, Canada and New Zealand, and from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Department of Public Information and UNESCO. From the responses received to recommendations on participation and awareness-raising, there is not enough information on whether States and United Nations agencies are adopting comprehensive strategic policy

frameworks to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous issues in ensuring their right to education.

Other recommendations

41. Several recommendations were made on the margins of creating networks and sharing best practices. They call for States, the United Nations system and indigenous peoples' organizations to strengthen the necessary communication. education and information infrastructure and support networks of educators on indigenous issues, and to share experiences on education that represent best practices at the primary or community level, based on indigenous cultures and traditions. So far, a limited number of responses to these recommendations have been received by the Permanent Forum. FAO reported that it organized a special session on indigenous peoples' communication for development which focused on the role of communication in combating the marginalization and isolation of indigenous peoples and on its potential to foster their self-determination and development.

42. Table 2 provides a breakdown by session of the number of recommendations made and implemented concerning education.

Table 2
Implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on education

	Recommendations		
Permanent Forum session	*Total*	*Implemented (ongoing or complete)*	*Not yet implemented or reporting not received*
First	–	–	–
Second	10	9	1
Third	6	5	1
Fourth	11	7	4
Fifth	4	4	–
Sixth	2	2	–
Seventh	2	2	–
Eighth	1	1	–
Ninth	5	3	2
Tenth	1	1	–
Total	**42**	**34**	**8**

C. Culture

43. Indigenous peoples have, over the course of generations, developed rich sets of knowledge about the natural world, health, technologies and techniques, rites and rituals and other cultural expressions. Culture is one of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and is inextricably linked to indigenous peoples' identity, their traditional knowledge, their experiences with the natural environment and hence their territorial and cultural rights. Cultural practices, traditions and values of

indigenous peoples — as long as they are in line with human rights principles — can play a critical and positive role in advancing and promoting gender equality and human rights. Although culture was not explicitly mentioned in the Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000, it has been widely acknowledged as a key element to be taken into account in order to achieve the development goals set by the international community.

44. In 2005, on the occasion of the first review of the Millennium Development Goals, the international community recognized the diversity of the world and that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind. In 2010, while the Millennium Development Goals were reviewed for the second time, States went one step further by explicitly emphasizing the importance of culture for development and its contribution to the achievement of the Goals, and by encouraging international cooperation in the cultural field. This was followed by the adoption of two resolutions on culture and development by the General Assembly, resolutions 65/166 in 2010 and 66/208 in 2011, which both recognized the positive contribution of local and indigenous traditional knowledge as the need to preserve and maintain indigenous peoples' knowledge.

45. Under the basic principles of universality, equality and non-discrimination, indigenous peoples are entitled to the full range of rights established under international law. Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions." This is also echoed in ILO Convention No. 169, articles 13, 23, 30; the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, article 7; the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, article 15; the Convention on Biological Diversity, articles 8 (j), 10 (c), 15; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 27.

46. At its second, third, sixth, ninth and tenth sessions, the Permanent Forum made recommendations on culture. These recommendations reflect the Permanent Forum's broad thematic mandate, addressing a wide range of issues, including education, environment, economic and social development, health and human rights. Recommendations have been addressed to States, United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, in particular UNESCO, World Intellectual Property Organization, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Development Programme, World Trade Organization, OHCHR, academia, donors, indigenous peoples and civil society. It demonstrates that culture is an essential component for the survival of indigenous peoples.

Indigenous women

47. At its third session, in 2004, the Permanent Forum made 14 recommendations on culture under the special theme "Indigenous women". It emphasized that knowledge systems of indigenous women are the essence of their cultural

expression and identity. The Permanent Forum also recognized the importance of identifying and the need to define the issues and needs of indigenous women, taking into account regional and local cultural differences, and the need to put in place policies and mechanisms to increase indigenous women's access to markets and capital in order to enable them to turn their traditional skills into sustainable forms of income generation (E/2002/43, para. 31). Other recommendations ranged from the instrumental role of women in indigenous societies as the custodians of sacred knowledge and power, and as medical specialists. This also included the recognition of women and their instrumental roles in indigenous societies as educators, healers and ritual specialists (ibid., para. 35).

Legislation acknowledging traditional knowledge

48. At its second session, held in 2003, the Permanent Forum made recommendations to States to consider constitutional and other legal and educational reforms to recognize and respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity and spiritual practices, within the framework of international human rights. The Forum welcomed the initiative of UNESCO to draft a convention on intangible heritage and request the participation, consultation and dialogue with indigenous peoples and the Forum. In October 2003, the Convention for the Safeguard of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted.

49. The Permanent Forum also made recommendations to WIPO and its member States to take practical steps to ensure that the inappropriate and unauthorized documentation and publication of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions/folklore do not occur, and to reinforce the capacity of indigenous peoples and local communities to make informed decisions in their own interests concerning whether and how documentation should be issued. In addition, the Forum called upon WIPO, States and other stakeholders to facilitate the participation of indigenous peoples, local communities and the Forum in sessions of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore and in related consultations, caucuses, briefings and workshops. In October 2005, member States of WIPO set up a Voluntary Fund for Accredited Indigenous and Local Communities.

50. At its ninth session, held in 2010, the Permanent Forum welcomed Economic and Social Council decision 2009/250 on a proposed amendment to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, related to the traditional use of the coca leaf. The Forum recommended that States support this initiative, taking into account articles 11, 24 and 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In 2013, the traditional use of the coca leaf was accepted in accordance with article 50, paragraph 3, of the Single Convention.

51. At its tenth session, held in 2011, the Permanent Forum confirmed the intention to participate in the thirty-fifth session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to encourage a review of existing procedures with regard to the rights to free, prior and informed consent and related mechanisms, norms and standards in the preparation and processing of world heritage nominations by States parties. In June 2011, a member of the Forum participated at the session.

Intercultural dialogue

52. At its second session, the Permanent Forum recommended that States introduce indigenous languages in public administration in indigenous territories, where feasible; and support indigenous media and promote the engagement of indigenous youth in indigenous programmes; in addition, to organize sports and athletic games involving indigenous sports in order to challenge existing misconceptions by highlighting diverse community expressions. At its third session, the Permanent Forum recommended that States develop intercultural public policies to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and strengthen, in an equitable manner, local cultures as a way to eliminate all forms of discrimination and segregation that have deepened historic inequalities. At its sixth session, the Permanent Forum, considering that 2008 was the International Year of Languages, recommended that the Economic and Social Council approve an expert group meeting on indigenous languages (E/C.19/2008/3) to consider concrete actions and legislative development aimed at mainstreaming principles of cultural diversity and strengthening indigenous languages as a way to promote intercultural dialogue and affirm indigenous peoples' identity.

Indigenous peoples' participation

53. The Permanent Forum made a number of recommendations to States and United Nations agencies and other stakeholders to support indigenous peoples' participation in meetings, management of cultural sites, preparation of guidelines, ethical codes of conduct, and monitoring mechanism, among others (E/2003/43, paras. 97, and 100-105). However, the process of indigenous participation still faces fundamental challenges. Currently, at United Nations meetings, indigenous peoples participate at the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore sessions organized by WIPO and the article 8 (j) on traditional knowledge and access and benefit-sharing session organized by the CBD. The Convention on Biological Diversity and WIPO provide funds to support the participation of indigenous peoples. Recently, there has been a Permanent Forum member participating at annual sessions of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

Other recommendations

54. There are a number of recommendations calling on States and United Nations agencies to support indigenous peoples in their process of cultural heritage restoration and strengthening. Furthermore, recommendations were made to reinforce indigenous concepts of economic, social, political, cultural and spiritual well-being and cultural diversity, and development indicators to measure how such well-being and cultural diversity are promoted. In 2010, the secretariat of the Permanent Forum organized an expert group meeting on Development with Culture and Identity, articles 3 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, where it was reiterated that the right to self-determination is the basic fundamental condition for indigenous peoples to exercise their well-being (E/C.19/2010/14, paras. 40, 43 and 44).

55. Table 3 provides a breakdown by session of the number of recommendations made and implemented concerning culture.

Table 3
Implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on culture

		Recommendations	
Permanent Forum session	*Total*	*Implemented (ongoing or complete)*	*Not yet implemented or reporting not received*
Second	11	0	11
Third	14	12	2
Fourth	0	0	0
Fifth	0	0	0
Sixth	2	0	2
Seventh	0	0	0
Eighth	0	0	0
Ninth	5	1	4
Tenth	4	1	3
Total	**36**	**14**	**22**

III. Conclusion and recommendations

56. The scope of the Permanent Forum's recommendations address a broad range of health issues in line with indigenous peoples' holistic and cultural approach to health. At the same time, there are gaps that require attention. For example, addressing the specific rights and needs of indigenous women, youth and children is an urgent priority. **Also, the issue of indigenous men's health has not been mentioned in all of the Permanent Forum's recommendations. Hence, there is much work to be done in the future.**

57. Indigenous peoples' intangible heritage and cultural expressions are threatened because the important role of indigenous peoples in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of the intangible cultural heritage is neither recognized nor sufficiently considered and valued in policies for a sustainable future. Efforts are under way to ensure protection of indigenous knowledge, intangible heritage, and promotion of their cultural expressions that are collectively maintained and intergenerational in nature. It is also potentially a source of wealth to the wider community that is yet to be fully realized, and part of the cultural heritage of humanity.

58. The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 has resulted in renewed attention to the issue of indigenous participation in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. **The Permanent Forum should continue to call on the World Heritage Committee to review and revise its working methods and Operational Guidelines, with a view to ensuring that indigenous peoples are adequately consulted and involved in the management and protection of World Heritage sites, and that their free, prior and informed consent is obtained when their territories are being nominated and inscribed as World Heritage sites.**

59. **Considering the need to protect and enhance indigenous peoples' distinct identities and cultural institutions, philosophies and world views, customary laws, indigenous political governance and justice systems, indigenous knowledge systems and sustainable traditional livelihoods and other economic systems, and to rebuild indigenous peoples' cultures and communities in the urban centres displaced from their traditional territories, the Permanent Forum may wish to designate a member to write a broader report on how States and United Nations agencies operationalize and implement the recommendations of the Forum on this matter.**